

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO**

JOHN GROSSETETE,

Plaintiff,

v.

No. 15-cv-0592 MV/SMV

**FNU WILLIAMS,¹ J. LUCERO,
FNU GAUNA, FNU RODGERS,
and FNU DOES,**

Defendants.

ORDER DENYING MOTION FOR APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL

THIS MATTER is before the Court on Plaintiff's untitled letter requesting appointment of counsel [Doc. 10], filed on December 21, 2015. Plaintiff is incarcerated and proceeding pro se in this 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action. He reports that he takes medication for his "mental state," does not understand the mail he receives from the Court, is indigent, and cannot afford to hire a lawyer. [Doc. 10].

However, United States District Courts lack the authority to appoint counsel to represent indigent prisoners in § 1983 cases. *Mallard v. United States Dist. Court*, 490 U.S. 296, 298 (1989). In certain exceptional circumstances, a court may request the voluntary assistance of counsel pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(1). In deciding whether to request voluntary assistance of counsel, courts should consider "the merits of the litigant's claims, the nature of the factual issues raised in the claims, the litigant's ability to present his claims, and the complexity of the legal issues raised by the claims." *Rucks v. Boergermann*, 57 F.3d 978, 979 (10th Cir. 1995)

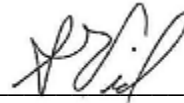
¹ Defendant Williams was dismissed from this action on November 18, 2015. [Doc. 6].

(internal quotation marks omitted). Ultimately, the burden is on the plaintiff “to convince the court that there is sufficient merit to his claim to warrant [a request for voluntary assistance] of counsel.” *Hill v. Smithkline Beecham Corp.*, 393 F.3d 1111, 1115 (10th Cir 2004) (internal quotation marks omitted).

The Court is not convinced that there is sufficient merit or complexity in Plaintiff’s claims to warrant requesting the voluntary assistance of counsel. Moreover, thus far, Plaintiff has been adequately presenting his claims.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that Plaintiff’s untitled letter requesting appointment of counsel [Doc. 10] is **DENIED** at this time.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



STEPHAN M. VIDMAR
United States Magistrate Judge